Claims

1. A method for the production of a soluble recombinant protein having the characteristics of ~~selected from~~ human Tumor Necrosis Factor Binding Protein I (TBP-I), ~~biologically active precursors and analogs thereof,~~ which comprises:

   i) transfecting eukaryotic cells with an expression vector comprising a DNA molecule encoding the whole human type I TNF receptor or a soluble domain thereof, and

   ii) culturing the transfected cells, whereby the desired protein is produced and secreted into the medium.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the DNA molecule encoding the whole type I TNF receptor is the cDNA having the sequence ~~depicted in Figure 1D~~ SEQ ID NO:1.

3. A method according to claim 2 wherein the cDNA is introduced into an expression vector and is cotransfected with a recombinant vector containing the dihydrofolate reductase (DHFR) cDNA into DHFR-deficient chinese hamster ovary (CHO) cells.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the cells are selected by growth in a nucleotide-free medium, individual clones are amplified by growth in the presence of methotrexate and the soluble protein secreted into the medium is detected by reaction with monoclonal and polyclonal antibodies raised against TBP-I.

5. A method according to claim 1 wherein the soluble protein secreted into the medium shows a retention time identical to that of TBP-I when analyzed by reversed phase HPLC.

6. A method according to claim 1 for the production of human TBP-I.

7. A method according to claim 1 for the production of a human TBP-I precursor or analog.

8. A soluble protein selected from precursors and analogs of TBP-I which are secreted into the medium of eukaryotic cells transfected with a cDNA encoding the whole type I human TNF receptor or a soluble domain thereof.

9. A soluble protein as claimed in claim 8 secreted into the medium of CHO cells transfected with the cDNA molecule depicted in Figure 1D.